



## **Congressman Ruiz's Results for Veterans**

### **Caring for our Veterans Harmed by Toxic Exposures**

#### **Congressman Ruiz has fought for years to combat the effects of toxic exposures:**

- ✓ **After hearing his constituent, Jennifer Kepner's story** about her exposure to burn pits while in service and her subsequent pancreatic cancer diagnosis, Congressman Ruiz made it his mission to address this health care crisis affecting our servicemen and women. After Jennifer's passing, Congressman Ruiz pledged to fight for Jennifer's wish that no other veteran suffer as she had.
  - ▮ **He began to support legislation that pushed for better tracking of veterans who suffered from burn pits and demanded accountability from the VA and DOD.**
  - ▮ **He requested a hearing from the House Veterans Affairs Committee on the use of burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.**
  - ▮ **In 2019 Congressman Ruiz established the first bipartisan and bicameral Burn Pits Caucus with Representative Wenstrup of Ohio.**

#### **The Honoring our PACT Act includes three bills introduced by Congressman Ruiz:**

- 1. H.R. 2432, the Jennifer Kepner HOPE Act**, which will extend eligibility for hospital, nursing home, and medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans who were exposed to burn pits
- 2. H.R. 2371, the Veterans' Right to Breathe Act**, which will provide a presumption of service-connection to burn pit-exposed veterans for certain respiratory diseases including chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer.
- 3. H.R. 2372, the Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act**, which will establish a presumption of service-connection for 23 diseases and cancers associated with exposure to burn pits including Reproductive Cancers, Pancreatic Cancer, and Glioblastoma.

#### **Congressman Ruiz worked with a coalition of veteran advocates and organizations to get this bill passed**

- ✓ Dr. Ruiz's office met regularly with the Jon Stewart of the Daily Show, Jon Feal of the Feal Good Foundation, Rosie Torres of Burn Pits 360, and the major Veteran Service Organizations including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and the Wounded Warrior Project to discuss ongoing projects and next steps
- ✓ He also worked with Congressional Leadership and the Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough to get this comprehensive legislation passed.

#### **Additional legislation signed into law addressing toxic exposures introduced by Congressman Ruiz:**

##### **117<sup>th</sup> Congress:**

##### **S. 1605, NDAA Fiscal Year 2022:**

- **H.R. 4397 the DOD Burn Pits Health Provider Training Act**, which requires DOD to implement mandatory training for all medical providers working under DOD on the potential health effects of burn pits.

- **H.R. 4400, the Burn Pit Registry Expansion Act**, which requires DOD and VA to expand Burn Pits Registry to Include Egypt and Syria.

#### **116th Congress:**

##### **H.R.6395, William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021:**

- **H.R. 7597, the DOD Burn Pits Research Status Act**, which requires DOD to report to Congress on all of the studies being conducted or funded by the DOD to assess the health effects of burn pits.
- **H.R. 7598, the Post-Deployment Burn Pit Question Act**, which requires DOD to include a separate, stand-alone question about burn pit exposure in the Post Deployment Health Assessments (DD Form 2796) to increase reporting of Burn Pit Exposure.

##### **S. 1790, NDAA Fiscal Year 2020:**

- **H. Amdt. 331**, which requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct an implementation plan to phase out the use of the nine remaining active burn pits identified in an April 2019 report to Congress.
- **H. Amdt. 332**, which directs the DOD to provide Congress and the Veterans Administration with a list of the locations of military bases, posts, forward operating bases, combat outposts, and any other locations at which open-air burn pits have been used.

#### **115th Congress:**

##### **H.R. 5515, John S. McCain NDAA Fiscal Year 2019 :**

- **H.AMDT. 639**, which requires the DOD to conduct a feasibility study on phasing out the use of burn pits.
- **H.AMDT.645**, which requires the DOD to carry out an education campaign to let servicemembers know about their eligibility to enroll in the burn pits registry.